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Industrial Program of the Young Men's Christian Association

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THE unique place and value of the Young Men's Christian Associations in industry in America are due to the observance of a well defined industrial policy and program.

THE OBJECTIVE

Christian character is the primary objective. The motives, methods and programs used are definitely Christian, both in the broadest sense of the word Christian, and in the sense of relating men personally to Jesus Christ and to His service. It is a work by men and boys for men and boys; to enlist them in the service to their fellows, as well as in self-improvement; to train them in Christian service and to render service to those who need it.

The Association is related to the whole human factor in industry. There is no limitation of the Association objective to any special group, i.e., no class objective. No service is rendered to either laborer or capitalist nor to employers or employees as such. The work is for each and all, as men individually and collectively. An all-round service is rendered. The complete program of the Association is carried out in so far as possible in the physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, and economic life, individual and collective, and where necessary for the family and for the community. The Y. M. C. A. serves men and boys in all relationships: (a) where they work, (b) where they live, (c) where they recreate.

Other results in addition to the development of Christian character are expected and secured. Among these are: improved working, living and leisure

conditions; increased happiness and contentment; greater efficiency in production; better relations between employers and employees; higher appreciation of personality; more opportunity for self-expression; greater brotherhood.

THE CALL TO THE INDUSTRIAL FIELD

The Young Men's Christian Association is called to give special attention to the industrial field for a number of reasons:

Men and boys are increasingly being massed around the industries.

All of the needs common to men are to be met plus those that are created by industrial conditions.

They can be reached because they are massed.

No group of men or boys has been found unresponsive to the spirit and the program of the Association when it has been accurately interpreted to them.

Industry holds the resources both of men and money with which to meet the needs it creates.

Financial support.—The Association does not hesitate to lay industry (both employers and employees) under tribute for financial support of Association work. Taking the country as a whole today the employees give more than a dollar for every dollar contributed by employers for the maintenance of this work. Frequently, however, at the inception of the work, the employers bear the bulk of the cost. The employees' contribution is a gradual development. Employees are never asked to contribute toward buildings or other premises erected on land owned by the employer. They fre-

quently, however, contribute toward the furnishings of such buildings.

Leadership.—While no work is undertaken without a trained secretary, yet there are always volunteer leaders to be found in the industry. The industry furnishes the necessary volunteer service. The Association is always a local institution composed of the men and boys of the community. The only non-local factor introduced is the trained secretary, and he quickly becomes a part of the resident forces of the community.

Wherever the work has been established upon the right basis and both employees and employers have given approval and support, the work has been a success. The only place where it has failed is where it has not been tried under wise leadership.

THE NATURE OF THE WORK

It is a coöperative work. It identifies both employers and employees, individually and collectively, in an enterprise of mutual interest, one that serves the interests of both. The Association's work develops the sense of mutuality between all the parties in industry. The Association's relation is one of mutuality rather than neutrality.

It is uncommercial. The Association seeks only human welfare. There is no selfish motive. The support from employees and employers should be sufficient to prevent the Association from having to stress the revenue producing features overmuch. Too much effort to make the Association self-supporting would result in harmful commercialism.

It is unofficial. There is no organic relation to either employer or employee as such, nor to any organization of either group. The secretary should never perform official duties for either the employers or the employees.

It has a trained leadership. No work is ever established without the sustained supervision of a trained secretary or the equivalent.

The work is related to a permanent agency. Local, state, national, and international Association organizations can be laid under tribute for the benefit of every Association unit.

RELATION TO INDUSTRY

The Association's relation to both employers and employees is one of mutuality, not neutrality. The Association is composed of the men themselves, and is usually a cross-section of the whole industry and community, including both employers and employees. It operates in union and non-union fields and among works councils and with other employee representation plans. It follows that the activities in which they engage must be of mutual interest. The Association emphasizes the agreements between employers and employees, and, by this fact, disagreements are made more difficult.

The Association work should and does increase knowledge concerning industry, progress and conditions. It is not intended to obscure conditions that need correction. It is not an opiate to quiet unrest nor a lightning rod to divert strikes. It is never a substitute for better wages, shorter hours or good working conditions. It helps to increase earning power of the worker and helps him to increase the purchasing power of his earnings.

The Association creates an atmosphere of friendliness and confidence, which helps to prevent misunderstandings and to make possible the adjustment of differences when they do arise. Its great strength lies in making contacts in the spirit of friendliness and service.

While the Association elects of its own accord to serve in this sphere of

mutual interests and for a definite objective, it also becomes the active ally of every other constructive force. By its emphasis upon character values, including integrity, justice, fairness, good will, etc., it makes laws more effective. It has never impeded social legislation, and has always been an aid to social progress even though its functions have not been legislative.

By begetting the confidence of employers and employees, Association leaders can and do lift the level of industrial attitudes and relations that affect wages, hours and conditions. If sufficiently informed, the secretary can help the industry in developing safety, health and general welfare methods, as well as personal hygiene, and domestic and community ideals. In respect to issues between employees and employers, it has been found that by effective work in the realm of their mutual interests, it has been possible to bring about an adjustment of matters which previously had lain in the realm of their disagreements.

PROGRAM

The International Committee provides a staff of secretaries who help local and state Associations to establish and maintain:

The full program of the regular Y. M. C. A. among industrial workers throughout the entire country. This includes all of the physical, educational, social and religious activities.

Special work by industries—i. e. adapted to industrial cities and towns, iron and steel centers, textile mills, mining and lumber camps, etc.

Immigration and Emigration service in North America and Europe.

Enlisting college students (especially in engineering schools) and relating them in first hand contact and study in industry.

Industrial Motion Picture Bureau and other bureau service.

From 35 to 40 per cent of the Association membership is drawn from industry and transportation.

Because the best service to men and boys is impossible in many industrial communities, unless some service is rendered to the family, it has been found desirable to include provision for work for women and girls in some places. This involves the use of women's committees and sometimes women employees as visitors or aides. Wherever possible this work for women and girls is handled by the Y. W. C. A. Sometimes this is done exclusively by both the Y. W. and Y. M. C. A. and occasionally both organizations operate in the same "Y" building.

In adapting its program to industry the Association will consider the special needs of various groups, for example: skilled mechanics, machinery operatives, apprentices, unskilled labor; also, native workers (white), native workers (colored), foreign-born workers; or, the boys under twenty-one, and especially the foremen.

The activities are planned with regard to the conditions and needs growing out of the living, working and leisure conditions. Even for night shifts, recreation, Bible classes, social and educational work have been found possible.

In the large industries classes may be conducted in departments; sports may be organized by departments; meetings at noon, shop sings, socials, etc., are often arranged by departments. Foremen's meetings are a most valuable feature. The tactical importance of the foreman which is constantly increasing has led to a large emphasis upon foremen's clubs and training courses in human relations.

While at times it may be possible to render only limited service, the all-

round welfare of the individual is kept in view. In some places only physical work may be done at first; in other places, social or educational work will be undertaken first; and yet in other places merely creature comforts may be provided *at first*; but, in all cases, the all-round objective of the Association should be kept clearly in mind.